



DATCP leading ag trade mission to China

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MADISON – Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) Secretary Ben Brancel and staff from DATCP's Wisconsin International Agribusiness Center are in China this week leading a delegation of more than 30 Wisconsin agricultural professionals on a trade mission to Wisconsin's sister state, Heilongjiang Province, China.

"This trade mission provides a unique opportunity for us that no other state has had," Brancel said. "We will not only introduce Wisconsin dairy products at the Expo, but we also will have a chance to share Wisconsin's best dairy practices in a special forum. Our three-pronged approach will also include meetings with government leaders to discuss important trade issues."

This approach includes direct business-to-business contacts at the China World Dairy Expo and Summit starting Wednesday in Harbin. The Wisconsin Pavilion is the largest in the U.S. portion of the trade show and includes companies selling feed, farm equipment, dairy genetics, cheese and ginseng. The UW-River Falls Dairy Pilot Plant has developed a ginseng and cranberry ice-cream for trade show visitors to sample. Cranberries are Wisconsin's state fruit, and Wisconsin grows more than 95 percent of U.S. ginseng, a product in high demand by Chinese consumers. Ellsworth Cooperative Creamery will offer samples of deep-fried cheese curds.

The second prong of opportunity is for Wisconsin farmers and agriculturalists to demonstrate Wisconsin's dairy expertise during the U.S./China Dairy Forum, scheduled Tuesday in Harbin. State Veterinarian Dr. Paul McGraw along with Wisconsin farmers, cheese processors and university educators will be presenting during the forum.

The trade mission's third prong includes government-to-government meetings during which Brancel, along with USDA officials, will discuss important trade issues such as barriers or hurdles that might affect trade between Wisconsin and China.

"International trade is all about relationships," said Jen Pino-Gallagher, Bureau Director for DATCP's international agribusiness center. "Meeting face to face creates the perfect opportunity to build awareness of Wisconsin products, services and expertise. This sets Wisconsin apart."

China is an important trade partner for Wisconsin agriculture. The country ranked third in 2014 for agricultural exports from Wisconsin. Products in demand include hides and skins, whey, lactose, lumber, ginseng and bovine semen. Total Wisconsin agricultural exports to China were valued at \$278 million in 2014.

Heilongjiang, which is located along the Russian border in northeastern China, is known as the center of China's dairy industry. The province was home to nearly 2 million cows in 2013, according to data from trade show organizers. China and Heilongjiang have had a sister-state relationship since 1982.

DATCP's International Agribusiness Center provides education and technical assistance to help Wisconsin farms and agribusinesses reach new international markets. For more information about services or upcoming events, visit <http://datcp.wi.gov/Business/Exports>.

Watch for information about the trip on social media at #WIagmission.

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